

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: LEE GARDENS NORTH HISTORIC DISTRICT (000-9411)
Other names/site number: Woodbury Park Apartments

2. Location

Street & Number: 2300-2341 N. 11th Street ☐ Not for Publication
City or town: ☐ Vicinity
State: Virginia Code: VA County: Arlington Code: 013 Zip Code: 22201

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally.
(☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Virginia Department of Historic Resources

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> see continuation sheet	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> see continuation sheet	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other, (explain:)	_____	_____

LEE GARDENS NORTH HISTORIC DISTRICT**ARLINGTON COUNTY, VA****Name of Property****County and State****5. Classification**

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	No. Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private	<input type="checkbox"/> Building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> Public-Local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District	<u>7</u>	___ Buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> Public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> Site	___	___ Sites
<input type="checkbox"/> Public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> Structure	___	___ Structure
	<input type="checkbox"/> Object	___	___ Objects
		<u>7</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing
Garden Apartments, Apartment Houses
and Apartment Complexes in Arlington
County, Virginia: 1934-1954

Number of contributing
Resources previously
listed in the National
Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories
from instructions)

Current Functions (enter
categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling

DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling

[X] See continuation sheet

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

MIXED: Art Deco, Moderne, and Colonial Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

Foundation: BRICK

Walls: BRICK

Roof: ASPHALT

Narrative Description

Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets

[X] See continuation sheet

LEE GARDENS NORTH HISTORIC DISTRICT

ARLINGTON COUNTY, VA

Name of Property

County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark x in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark x in all the boxes that apply.)

☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

☐ **B** removed from its original location.

☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.

☐ **D** a cemetery.

☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

☐ **F** a commemorative property.

☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMUNITY PLANNING
AND DEVELOPMENT
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1949-1950

Significant Dates

1949-1950

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

F&W Construction

Mesrobian, Mihran

Schlosberg, Melvin

Schnider, Fred

[X] See continuation sheet

LEE GARDENS NORTH HISTORIC DISTRICT**ARLINGTON COUNTY, VA****Name of Property****County and State****9. Major Bibliographic References**☒ See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67)☐ previously listed in the NR☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register☐ designated a National Historic Landmark☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

☒ State SHPO office☐ Other State agency☐ Federal agency☒ Local government☐ University☒ Other

Specify repository:

Arlington County Public Library;Private Collection of Caroline MesrobianHickman (granddaughter of architect)**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property _____ Approximately 14.540 acres

UTM References Alexandria USGS Map1) 1/8/ 3/1/8/8/8/5/ 4/3/0/5/8/1/8/

Zone Easting Northing

3) 1/8/ 3/1/9/0/2/4/ 4/3/0/6/0/5/6/

Zone Easting Northing

5) 1/8/ 3/1/9/0/7/3/ 4/3/0/5/8/4/4/

Zone Easting Northing

2) 1/8/ 3/1/8/8/4/9/ 4/3/0/6/0/4/9/

Zone Easting Northing

4) 1/8/ 3/1/9/2/1/4/ 4/3/0/5/9/9/4/

Zone Easting Northing

☐ See continuation sheet**Verbal Boundary Description**

Lee Gardens North is located on approximately 14.540 acres in Arlington County, Virginia between North Barton Street to the west, 10th Street to the south, Arlington Boulevard to the east, and Fairfax Drive/ County Park to the north. The apartment buildings are orientated to North 11th Street (formerly known as North Wayne Street), which bisects the site. Lee Gardens North is located in the Clarendon-Courthouse neighborhood.

☐ See continuation sheet**Boundary Justification**☒ See continuation sheet**11. Form Prepared By**Name/title Laura V. Trieschmann and Jennifer B. Hallock, Architectural HistoriansOrganization EHT Traceries, Inc. Date May 1, 2003Street & Number 1121 5th Street, NW Telephone (202) 393-1199

City or Town Washington State D.C. Zip code 20001

LEE GARDENS NORTH HISTORIC DISTRICT

ARLINGTON COUNTY, VA

Name of Property

County and State

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Lee Gardens Housing Corporation, c/o Arlington Housing Corporation
street & number S. 2300 9th Street telephone 703/486-0626
city or town Arlington state Virginia zip code 22204

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of the Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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LEE GARDENS NORTH HISTORIC DISTRICT, ARLINGTON COUNTY, VA (000-9411)

Section number 7 Page 1

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Constructed in 1949-1950, Lee Gardens North Historic District is located at 2300-2341 North 11th Street in Arlington County, Virginia. The ten-acre property is set to the north of North 10th Street and west of Arlington Boulevard in the neighborhood of Clarendon-Courthouse. Lee Gardens North is a garden apartment complex consisting of thirty attached masonry structures forming seven buildings. Noted architect Mihran Mesrobian served as the designer and the F&W Construction Company was responsible for erecting it under the direction of developers Melvin Schlosberg and Fred Schnider. The siting, massing, symmetry, form, and ornamentation of the property is distinctly Colonial Revival in style, with detailing and some fenestration elements influenced by the Art Deco and Moderne style. The flat-roof structures have rectangular, H-shaped, and T-shaped footprints and are attached by gable-roofed structures to create a variety of irregular footprints. Set upon partially raised foundations pierced with window openings, the buildings stand three stories in height. The buildings are constructed of masonry with brick laid in six-course American bond with concrete detailing surrounding select window openings. The red brick of the structures contrasts with the blonde brick used to create the water tables, string courses, cornice, and quoins. Several of the buildings are painted, a design concept presented by the project architect Mihran Mesrobian to break up the monotony. The flat-roofed structures have metal coping obscuring the built-up composite cladding and the gable roofs have molded cornices, enclosed tympanums, and asphalt-shingle cladding. The public entries, which are not particularly prominent, are sheltered under half-hipped porticoes. Paved walkways, sidewalks, brick walls with concrete detailing and posts, playgrounds, courtyards, and parking improve the landscape. The buildings were renovated at the turn of the 21st century, with the reconstruction of many of the entry porticoes, replacement of the original windows with vinyl sash, and the modification of the interior apartment layouts.

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DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Site

Lee Gardens North, located on Lots 20A and 21, is bounded by North Barton Street to the west, North 10th Street to the south, Arlington Boulevard to the east, and Fairfax Drive/County Park to the north. North 11th Street winds through the property. As documented by *Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps* and the 1938 *Franklin Survey of Arlington County*, the site was unimproved before the construction of Lee Gardens North in 1949.

Large-scale, high-rise apartment buildings from the late 20th century border the self-contained site to the north and west. Single-family dwellings dating from the second quarter of the 20th century are located to the west. The ten acres making up Lee Gardens North were originally part of a thirty-acre tract purchased by the developers in 1941 specifically for use as a garden apartment complex. Known originally as Lee Gardens Apartment Complex, the thirty-acre tract was divided east/west by North 10th Street with twenty acres located to the south in the neighborhood of Lyon Park and ten acres to the north in Clarendon-Courthouse. The first of the two-phase project undertaken by the developers was the construction of Lee Gardens South (currently known as Sheffield Court) in 1941-1942. This property, located within the Lyon Park National Register Historic District, is Colonial Revival in style with a distinct reference to the Capitol at Williamsburg serving as the focal point. Arlington Boulevard serves as the eastern border. Originally known as Lee Boulevard and now known as U.S. Route 50, Arlington Boulevard is a highly traveled transportation route established in the late 1930s that led directly to Washington, D.C. from the quickly growing Northern Virginia suburbs.

Lee Gardens North is accessed from North 10th Street via North 11th Street, which winds through the property to the east of the largest of the seven buildings. A crescent-shaped parklet is located to the east of North 11th Street at the center of the property, with the walkways and drives radiating outward to the remaining six buildings. Mesrobian was responsible for the design of the landscape, including the drives, walkways, sidewalks, parking, playgrounds, courtyards, and brick walls. The complex promulgates the best in garden apartment planning integrating large

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expanses of open space with small-scale apartment buildings that provided good air circulation, pleasing views, and enhanced light in each apartment.

2300-2306 and 2334-2340 North 11th Street

Contributing

The largest of the seven buildings is located at 2300-2306 and 2340-2340 North 11th Street. Colonial Revival in style, the building has an irregular footprint composed of six attached structures. Two of the attached structures have gabled roofs with enclosed tympanums and the other four structures have flat roofs. The gable-roofed structures are red brick with blond brick and concrete detailing. The flat-roofed structures are painted cream. The three-story building with a raised foundation is constructed of six-course American-bond brick. The water table is a single course of rowlock brick headers flanking a soldier course. The quoins at the corners of the structure are composed of a single course of bricks. Concrete panels with a low-relief Art Deco floriated pattern cap the quoins. The walls of the building are symmetrically pierced by single and triple window openings with painted concrete sills. The window openings hold 6/6 and 8/8 double-hung, vinyl replacement sash. The corners of the gabled-roof structures are pierced by 6/6 double-hung windows with wide mullions. These wrapping openings, set at 90-degree angles, are recessed slightly within the plane of the wall and framed by blonde brick quoins. Two windows on the eastern side of the building are ornamented with concrete crossetted surrounds. The pedimented gables have roundel windows with louvered vents and torus-shaped concrete surrounds. Concrete panels with recessed centers are located between the stories of the gabled-roof structures. Porticoes that were reconstructed around the turn of the 21st century cover the eight single-leaf public entries into the building. They have square wood posts and half-hipped roofs clad with standing-seam metal. An exterior chimney projects into the courtyard at the eastern end of the building. A concrete deck with metal rail is located in the northwestern corner of this courtyard, which is partially enclosed by a brick wall with posts capped by lanterns. A second metal rail is located along the northwestern side of the building. The interior of the building was not accessible at the time of the survey.

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2301-2307 North 11th Street

Contributing

The building at 2301-2307 North 11th Street is located to the east of North 10th Street on the southern side of the property. A courtyard is located between this building and the cross-plan building to the west. Colonial Revival in style, the building consists of seven structures composed of two H-shaped footprints. The long rectangular structures are covered by flat roofs and connected by either flat-roofed or gable-roofed structures. The three-story structure is constructed of six-course American-bond brick. The flat-roofed structures are red brick and the gable-roofed structures are painted cream. The water table is a single course of rowlock headers flanking a soldier course of red brick. The quoins at the corners of the structure are composed of a single course of blonde bricks. Concrete panels with a low-relief Art Deco floriated pattern cap the quoins. The walls of the building are symmetrically pierced by single and triple window openings with concrete sills. Shallow recessed panels separate the stories of the building. The window openings hold 4/4, 6/6, and 8/8 double-hung, vinyl replacement sash. The foundation level, where exposed within the slope of the site, has two-light sliding windows and 6/6 double-hung windows. The pedimented gables have roundel windows with louvered vents and torus-shaped surrounds. Porticoes that were reconstructed around the turn of the 21st century shelter six single-leaf public entries into the building. They have square wood posts and half-hipped roofs clad with standing-seam metal. The interior of the building was not accessible at the time of the survey.

2303 North 11th Street

Contributing

The building at 2303 North 11th Street is located to the east of North 11th Street, just north of North 10th Street. Distinctly Colonial Revival in style, the building has a cross plan capped by a cross-gabled roof clad in asphalt shingles. The three-story structure is constructed of six-course American-bond red brick. The water table is a single course of rowlock headers flanking a soldier course of red brick. The quoins at the corners of the structure are composed of a single course of blonde bricks. Concrete panels with a low-relief Art Deco floriated pattern cap the quoins. The walls of the building are symmetrically pierced by single and triple window openings with concrete sills. Shallow recessed panels separate the stories of the building. The

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window openings hold 6/6 double-hung, vinyl replacement sash. A single window on the southeastern side of the building is ornamented with a concrete crossetted surround. The foundation level, where exposed within the slope of the site, has two-light sliding windows. The single-leaf public entry into the building is located at the southeast corner, set within the cross plan. The portico, reconstructed around the turn of the 21st century, has square wood posts and a half-hipped roof clad with standing-seam metal. The interior of the building was not accessible at the time of the survey.

The architrave of the entablature includes a stretcher course of blonde bricks, stretcher course of red brick, header course of red brick, and a stretcher course of blonde bricks. The wood entablature has a plain frieze with bed molding and a shallow boxed cornice. The enclosed gable ends of the cross-gabled roof are composed of painted brick. A roundel opening with louvered vents pierces the center of the tympanum. The opening has shells, round rosettes and scrolled leaves. A tall cupola crowns the asphalt-shingle cross-gable roof. A six-light, round, wagon-wheel window pierces the square base of the cupola on each side. Above the projecting wood cornice of the base the ten-sided lantern has a fixed window opening with glass block. The cupola has a small hollow domed roof.

2309-2315 North 11th Street

Contributing

The building at 2309-2315 North 11th Street is located to the east of North 11th Street at the eastern side of the property. A courtyard is located between this building and the building at the southern side of the property. Colonial Revival in style, the building consists of six structures composed of two H-shaped footprints with long rectangular structures covered by flat roofs and are connected by two gable-roofed structures. The three-story structure is constructed of six-course American-bond brick. The flat-roofed structures are red brick and the gabled-roof structures are painted. The water table is a single course of rowlock headers flanking a soldier course of red brick. The quoins at the corners of the structure are composed of a single course of blonde bricks. Concrete panels with a low-relief Art Deco floriated pattern cap the quoins. The walls of the building are symmetrically pierced by single and triple window openings with concrete sills. Shallow recessed panels separate the stories of the building. The window

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openings hold 4/4, 6/6, and 8/8 double-hung, vinyl replacement sash. The foundation level, where exposed within the slope of the site, has two-light sliding windows and 6/6 double-hung windows. The pedimented gables have roundel windows with louvered vents and torus-shaped surrounds. Porticoes that were reconstructed around the turn of the 21st century shelter five single-leaf public entries into the building. They have square wood posts and half-hipped roofs clad with standing-seam metal. Over the entry at 2315 North 11th Street has an elongated glass block window. On the east side of the building is a half-hipped metal overhanging roof sheltering window openings framed with wood laid in a grid pattern. An exterior chimney is located on the south elevation. The interior of the building was not accessible at the time of the survey.

2317-2325 North 11th Street

Contributing

The building at 2317-2325 North 11th Street is located to the east of North 11th Street at the center of the property. A courtyard with brick wall and posts with lanterns is located between this building and the building to the west. Colonial Revival in style, the building consists of five structures. The three rectangular structures have flat roofs and are connected by two gable-roofed structures. The three-story structure is constructed of six-course American-bond red brick. The water table is a single course of rowlock headers flanking a soldier course of red brick. The quoins at the corners of the structure are composed of a single course of blonde bricks. Concrete panels with a low-relief Art Deco floriated pattern cap the quoins. The walls of the building are symmetrically pierced by single and triple window openings with concrete sills. Shallow recessed panels separate the stories of the building. The window openings hold 4/4, 6/6, and 8/8 double-hung, vinyl replacement sash. The corners of the gable-roofed structures are pierced by 6/6 double-hung windows with wide mullions. These wrapping openings are recessed slightly within the plane of the wall and framed by blonde brick quoins. The foundation level, where exposed within the slope of the site, has two-light sliding windows and 6/6 double-hung windows. Windows on the north and west sides of the building are ornamented with concrete crosssetted surrounds. The pedimented gables have roundel windows with louvered vents and torus-shaped surrounds. On the east side of the building are two half-hipped metal overhanging roofs sheltering window openings framed with wood laid in a grid pattern.

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Porticoes that were reconstructed around the turn of the 21st century shelter five single-leaf public entries into the building. They have square wood posts and half-hipped roofs clad with standing-seam metal. Over the entry at 2317 North 11th Street is an elongated glass block window. The interior of the building was not accessible at the time of the survey.

2327-2331 North 11th Street

Contributing

The building at 2327-2331 North 11th Street is located to the east of North 11th Street at the center of the property. A courtyard with a brick wall and posts topped with lanterns is located between this building and the building to the east. Colonial Revival in style, the building consists of three structures. Two of the structures have gabled roofs with pedimented ends and are connected by a flat-roofed structure. The three-story structure is constructed of six-course American-bond red brick. The water table is a single course of rowlock headers flanking a soldier course of red brick. The quoins at the corners of the structure are composed of a single course of blonde bricks. Concrete panels with a low-relief Art Deco floriated pattern cap the quoins. The walls of the building are symmetrically pierced by single and triple window openings with concrete sills. Shallow recessed panels separate the stories of the building. The window openings hold 4/4, 6/6, and 8/8 double-hung, vinyl replacement sash. The corners of the gabled-roof structures are pierced by 6/6 double-hung windows with wide mullions. These wrapping openings are recessed slightly within the plane of the wall and framed by blonde brick quoins. The foundation level, where exposed within the slope of the site, has two-light sliding windows and 6/6 double-hung windows. Windows on the north and west sides of the building are ornamented with concrete crossetted surrounds. The pedimented gables have roundel windows with louvered vents and torus-shaped surrounds. Porticoes that were reconstructed around the turn of the 21st century shelter three single-leaf public entries into the building. They have square wood posts and half-hipped roofs clad with standing-seam metal. An exterior chimney is located on the west side of the gable-roofed structure at the northern end. The interior of the building was not accessible at the time of the survey.

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2333-2341 North 11th Street

Contributing

The building at 2333-2341 North 11th Street is located in the northwestern corner of the property. Colonial Revival in style, the building consists of four cross-shaped structures covered by flat roofs. The three-story building with raised foundation is constructed of six-course American-bond brick painted cream. Despite the painting of the structure, the ornamentation is clearly visible. The water table is a single course of rowlock brick headers flanking a soldier course. The quoins at the corners of the structure are composed of a single course of bricks. Concrete panels with a low-relief Art Deco floriated pattern cap the quoins. The walls of the building are symmetrically pierced by single, paired, and triple window openings with painted concrete sills. The window openings hold 6/6 double-hung, vinyl replacement sash. A single window on the western side of the building is ornamented with concrete crossetted surrounds. Concrete panels with recessed centers are located on the southwest side of the building, denoting the change in stories. Porticoes that were reconstructed around the turn of the 21st century cover the five single-leaf public entries into the building. They have square wood posts and half-hipped roofs clad with standing-seam metal. The interior of the building was not accessible at the time of the survey. The leasing office for the apartment complex is located at 2335 North 11th Street.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Lee Gardens North Historic District in Arlington County, Virginia, is an excellent example of a garden apartment complex that illustrates the prolific design skills of architect Mihran Mesrobian and the original standards promoted by the Federal Housing Authority (FHA). Although construction of the thirty-acre garden apartment complex began in 1941 with Lee Gardens South, the second-phase construction of Lee Gardens North was completed in 1949-1950 using FHA-insured financing to serve post-war housing needs. The thirty masonry structures, consisting of seven buildings with varying plans set around landscaped courtyards, present stylistic elements and forms closely associated with the Colonial Revival style, which was favored by the FHA. The ornamental detailing of the buildings varies throughout the complex, also drawing from the Art Deco and Moderne styles of which Mesrobian was so well versed. Mesrobian tailored his designs to the needs of the developer and setting of the surrounding neighborhood. Further, he used the 1934 construction, design, and property standards instigated by the FHA, requirements that had been changed in 1941 when the need for low-cost housing for wartime workers became essential in the suburbs of Washington, D.C.

Lee Gardens North Historic District at 2300-2341 North 11th Street is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under criterion A in the area of community planning and development because of its association with the early-20th-century rental-housing boom spurred by the establishment of the Federal Housing Administration (FHA). Further, Lee Gardens North Historic District is eligible under criterion C in the area of architecture as a unique garden apartment complex design by noted architect Mihran Mesrobian. The architectural achievement of Lee Gardens North combines the best in garden apartment planning with FHA-insured financing guidelines to make this property an excellent example of the garden apartment complex as described in the Multiple Property Nomination, *Garden Apartments, Apartment Houses and Apartment Complexes in Arlington County, Virginia: 1934-1954*.

Lee Gardens North Historic District, to the north of North 10th Street, is oriented around North 11th Street, which divides the complex unequally as it winds through the property. The garden apartment complex contains thirty masonry structures, joined to create seven buildings

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surrounding landscaped courtyards with connecting walkways, sidewalks, and parking. The buildings all contribute to the historic district.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Lee Gardens Apartment Complex

The Lee Gardens North Historic District is the second phase of the Lee Gardens Apartment Complex, undertaken by Lee Gardens, Inc. between 1941 and 1950. Developers Melvin Schlosberg and Fred Schnider, who served respectively as the president and secretary/treasurer of Lee Gardens, Inc, a Delaware corporation, purchased the property in 1941 for \$51,000 from David Porter, Paul Capron, and Webster Capron.¹ The thirty-acre tract of land, historically part of the Harriet R.F. Vinson estate, is bounded on the east by Arlington Boulevard and divided east/west into two separate apartment complexes by North 10th Street.² The unimproved property was ideally located along Arlington Boulevard (originally known as Lee Boulevard and now known as U.S. Route 50), which was a major transportation route established in the late 1930s that led directly to Washington, D.C. from the quickly growing Northern Virginia suburbs.

The construction of Lee Gardens Apartment Complex by the developers was in response to the growing housing needs sparked by the influx of wartime workers into the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area during and immediately after World War II (1941-1945). Arlington County, one of the fastest growing counties in the United States, became home to approximately one hundred seventy-six (176) new apartment buildings or complexes between 1934 and 1954.³ These new apartment buildings and complexes included both small and large developments, ranging from a single apartment building to multiple-building apartment complexes like Lee Gardens.

¹ Arlington County Courthouse, Land Records, Liber 542, Folio 217-220.

² Arlington County Courthouse, Land Records, Liber 542, Folio 218.

³ Arlington County Office of Planning, "Apartment Developments by Census Tracts, March 31, 1961," (Arlington County, Virginia: May 1961).

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The first phase of the project, which was known as Lee Gardens South (now known as Sheffield Court), was located to the south of North 10th Street along North Wayne Street. This section of the complex originally consisted of thirty-seven (37) buildings providing 590 apartments, including efficiencies, one-, two-, and three-bedroom units.⁴ Completed between 1941-1942, Lee Gardens South was located in the northeastern corner of the Lyon Park neighborhood, which was designated a National Register Historic District in 2003. The second phase of the garden apartment complex, Lee Gardens North (now known as Woodbury Park) was located in the neighborhood of Clarendon-Courthouse, north of North 10th Street. This complex flanked the winding route of North 11th Street. Constructed between 1949-1950 using FHA-insured financing, Lee Gardens North included thirty (30) structures attached to create seven (7) buildings, consisting of 359 apartments, including one-, two-, and three-bedroom units and just two efficiency units.⁵ Prominent Washington, D.C.-based architect Mihran Mesrobian was commissioned to design both phases of the apartment complex. Although both phases of the Lee Gardens Apartment Complex present the overwhelmingly popular Colonial Revival style of architecture, Lee Gardens South was more high style with a direct reference to the Colonial architecture of the Capitol at Williamsburg. The flanking buildings are less high style with elements of the fashionable Art Deco style. Lee Gardens North was less stylized by comparison overall, lacking a primary high-style Colonial Revival centerpiece. Rather, the smallest of the seven (7) buildings in Lee Gardens North is more highly detailed with Colonial Revival-style elements, including a red brick structural system, water table, quoins, and tall cupola with round, wagon-wheel window and small hollow domed roof. The remaining six buildings of Lee Gardens North utilized the Colonial Revival style as their base style with supporting elements associated with the Art Deco and Art Moderne styles common during the period. The connection between the two complexes, as planned by Mesrobian, is grounded in the use of the Colonial Revival style, the garden apartment setting, and scale of the buildings. The Lee Gardens Apartment Complex was one of four multiple-family housing projects designed by Mesrobian in Arlington County.⁶ His first project was Court House Manor at 1233 North Court

⁴ "Apartment Developments by Census Tracts, March 31, 1961," p. 11.

⁵ "Apartment Developments by Census Tracts, March 31, 1961," p. 11.

⁶ Board of Examiners and Registrars of Architects Application for Registration to Practice

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House Road (1940) and 1301 North Court House Road (1941, demolished 1981). In 1943, Mesrobian was commissioned to design Wakefield Manor at 1216-1220 N. Troy Street, 1201-1203 & 1215-1223 North Courthouse Road, and 2031 N. Fairfax Drive (demolished) and Calvert Manor at 1925-1927 North Calvert Street in 1948.⁷ The F&W Construction Company, which was owned in part by one of the developers who started Lee Gardens, Inc., constructed the Lee Gardens Apartment Complex as well as many of the other properties designed by Mesrobian and/or undertaken by Schlosberg and Schnider.

Federal Housing Administration and Its Influence on Lee Gardens North

The 1934 enactment of the National Housing Act (NHA) and the establishment of the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) made funding available for many of the large apartment projects in Arlington County. The use of FHA-backed financing required the project to follow guidelines provided by the NHA. These NHA guidelines addressed seven specific issues: community, neighborhood, site, buildings, dwelling units, services and cost. Although not specifically enacted to control architectural design, the more specific FHA standards included preferences related to the overall design of the projects in order to maximize the cost effectiveness of the project.⁸ The first commitment by the FHA to insure a mortgage on a low-cost housing act was Colonial Village (1935, 1939, 1954-1955) in Arlington County. The project's developer, Gustave Ring, repeated four standard building forms illustrating the then-fashionable Colonial Revival style with alternating roof designs and room arrangements. This interpretation of the FHA's standards had a substantial influence on the overall design of apartment complexes throughout Arlington County and the United States.

Architecture in the District of Columbia, Mihran Mesrobian, March 20, 1951. Archived by Caroline Mesrobian Hickman.

⁷ EHT Tracer Vertical Files, "Mihran Mesrobian," Washington, D.C.; Interviews with Caroline Mesrobian Hickman, March 2003, Washington, D.C.

⁸ The Way to Record Breaking Rents," *The Architectural Forum*, Volume 71, Number 2, August 1939, p. 134.

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By 1940, the FHA Large Housing Division turned its attention to the development of more low-rent housing for the burgeoning defense requirements throughout the United States, once again using Arlington County as its testing ground for new programs. In an effort to encourage more low-rent housing by private developers, the FHA lowered its minimum construction, design and property requirements. Changes adopted by the FHA included the omission of service walks, main entrances with public halls and stairs, garages, and landscaped community courtyards.⁹

After World War II, the need for housing in Arlington County continued to rise as servicemen returned home and many workers employed by the federal government during the war remained in the area. This need for housing in Arlington County between 1946 and 1954 resulted in the construction of over eighty-one (81) apartment building and complex projects, many with FHA-insured funding. The garden apartment complex at Lee Gardens North was one such project, targeted primarily at government employees with families. The thirty-building complex included a total of 359 units, the vast majority of which were two- and three-bedroom apartments. The project included just two efficiencies and fifty one-bedroom units.¹⁰

Although the FHA had lowered its minimum construction, design and property requirements in 1940, architect Mihran Mesrobian implemented many of the NHA's original design standards in his plan for Lee Gardens North in 1949-1950. This included service walks from the parking lots and public entries with shared halls and stairs. The three- and four-story buildings, higher than those initially considered acceptable by FHA, were set around landscaped courtyards that took advantage of the ten-acre site's natural topography and county-maintained street. Mesrobian was well versed in the standards of FHA having designed Wakefield Manor in 1943 and Calvert Manor in 1948, both of which were FHA-insured projects. Lee Gardens South, completed in 1942, was not a federally funded project; yet the apartment complex illustrated many of the same design standards promoted by the FHA.¹¹

⁹ "Garden Apartments," *The Architectural Forum*, Volume 72, Number 5, May 1940, p. 310.

¹⁰ "Apartment Developments by Census Tracts, March 31, 1961," p. 11.

¹¹ Sara Amy Leach, "Mihran Mesrobian's Suburban Virginia, Garden Apartments and Shopping Centers," Paper presented at Beyond the Mall, Washington, D.C., December 1994, p. 6.

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The architectural style of Lee Gardens South, like many of the FHA-financed projects in Arlington County, was designed in the Colonial Revival style. The style was utilized throughout the suburbs of the Washington metropolitan area during the first half of the 20th century, particularly for residential housing. The Colonial Revival style, which borrowed heavily from early American architecture—particularly Georgian and Federal buildings—was largely an outgrowth of a nationwide pride for the county's past and a rapidly growing interest in historic preservation. In the early phase, the style remained the exclusive domain of fashionable architectural firms and was favored for the large residences of wealthy clients. As the style spread to the suburbs and increased in popularity in the 20th century, the detailing and form became increasingly more modest to meet the needs and financial constraints of the growing middle class. Accordingly, the FHA promoted the style not only for its reuse of traditional elements, but because the ornamentation and floor plans were ideal for mass-production and thus, was cost effective.¹²

Architect Mihran Mesrobian had first-hand knowledge of the FHA standards and their preference for the Colonial Revival style, having worked on a number of FHA-insured projects. Further, having worked with prominent local developer Harry Wardman, Mesrobian was well versed in the design of apartment housing, particularly as it had been interpreted in the suburban neighborhoods of Washington, D.C. in the second quarter of the 20th century. The setting, landscaping, materials, and architectural design utilized by Mesrobian at Lee Gardens North were popular elements routinely associated with the Colonial Revival style and garden apartment design in and around the nation's capital. Educated at the Academie des Beaux Arts in Istanbul, Mesrobian skillfully augmented the Colonial Revival style by mixing elements from the Art Deco and Moderne styles. The Art Deco and Moderne styles were popular in the early 1920s through the 1940s particularly in Europe. Mesrobian employed such elements as the low-relief floriated patterns on cement panels, ornamentation in varying materials, and straight-arched window openings of the Art Deco style with the glass blocks, smooth wall finishes, string

¹² James C. Massey and Shirley Maxwell, *House Styles in America: The Old-House Journal Guide to the Architecture of American Homes*, (New York, New York: Penguin Group, 1999), pp. 176-187.

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courses, flat roofs, and corner windows more commonly associated with the Moderne style. These elements were interspersed throughout Lee Gardens North, reducing the repetition for which the Colonial Revival style and garden apartment complexes were known to practice.¹³

Architect: Mihran Mesrobian (1889-1975)

Prominent Washington, D.C. architect Mihran Mesrobian designed the Lee Gardens Apartment Complex. Born in Turkey to Armenian parents, Mesrobian was educated at the Academie des Beaux Arts in Istanbul, graduating in 1908. He took the position of Municipal Architect in Smyrna, later serving as an architect to the Sultan in Istanbul. In 1914, Mesrobian was drafted as a military engineer for the Turkish Army. He immigrated to the United States and settled in Washington, D.C. in 1921. In that same year, at the age of thirty-two, he began working as a draftsman for Harry Wardman, one of Washington, D.C.'s most prolific and well-known developers. Five years later, Mesrobian had become chief designer for Wardman's firm. His work included luxury hotels such as the Carlton (1926), the Hay-Adams (1927), and the Wardman Tower (1928). In 1928, Mesrobian completed plans for the Wardman Gardens, Harry Wardman's last big development concept. The ambitious project involved a large apartment complex of 747 units to be built on a site south of the Wardman Tower. Unfortunately, financial problems resulting from the construction of the Wardman Tower made it impossible for Harry Wardman to construct the Wardman Gardens project. By 1930, Wardman was forced to declare bankruptcy and Mesrobian opened a private practice, occasionally working for Wardman until the latter's death in 1938.

In his private practice, Mesrobian's commissions included the Dupont Circle Building (1931), a rug store at 1214 18th Street, N.W. (1931), and Sedgwick Gardens (1931-1932). Sedgwick

¹³ Leach, "Mihran Mesrobian's Suburban Virginia, Garden Apartments and Shopping Centers;" Marcus Whiffen, *American Architecture Since 1780, A Guide to the Styles*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1996), pp. 241-252; John J.-G. Blumenson, *Identifying American Architecture: A Pictorial Guide to Styles and Terms, 1600-1945*, (Nashville, Tennessee: American Association for State and Local History, 1997), pp. 74-79.

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Gardens illustrates his skill in combining architectural styles under a primary style, a design proficiency he also implemented at Lee Gardens North in 1949. Mesrobian utilized Byzantine, Medieval, and Islamic elements and united them under a Moderne scheme in the design of Sedgwick Gardens.

In addition to Mesrobian's residential commissions, he was also responsible for the design of several shopping centers in Arlington County and the neighboring City of Alexandria. In 1940, he designed a shopping center north of Arlington Boulevard on Glebe Road (71-89 North Glebe Road). Mesrobian designed two Acme Stores in 1941 – one on Lee Highway (demolished 1972) and one on South Eads Street in Alexandria. Additionally, he designed the Wakefield Shopping Center, which was constructed in 1946 to serve the adjoining apartment complex at Troy Street, North Courthouse Road and N. Fairfax Drive (demolished).¹⁴

Developers: Fred Schnider and Melvin Schlosberg

Although Fred Schnider's April 15, 1986 obituary in the *Washington Post* reveals some of the development team's past, little is known about Fred Schnider and Melvin Schlosberg. Fred Schnider was born in Russia, but immigrated to Washington, D.C. at the age of six. A banker and real estate developer, Schnider attended the University of Maryland and Georgetown University's law school. He started a construction business in the 1920s, which did not survive the Great Depression. In 1933, he went into the liquor business. Schnider went on to buy the

¹⁴ Leach, "Mihran Mesrobian's Suburban Virginia, Garden Apartments and Shopping Centers," pp. 8-9.

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National Brick & Supply Co. in 1942, which he sold in the 1960s. He helped found the First National Bank of Arlington in 1947 but sold his interest in the mid-1950s. In 1953, Schnider founded the Northern Virginia Savings and Loan Association, maintaining an interest until 1985. At the time of his death, Schnider was running the Fred Schnider Co., which was operating the Ballston Centre Complex. Less is known about Melvin Schlosberg, a real estate developer, who died prior to Schnider.¹⁵

The development team of Schnider and Schlosberg was responsible for the construction of numerous apartment buildings, garden apartment complexes, and shopping centers throughout Arlington County. This included Court House Manor at 1233 North Court Road (1940), 71-89 North Glebe Road (1940), Lewis Heights Apartments at Fort Belvoir, Keswick Gardens in Richmond, the Parkchester Courts (1952) in Anacostia, and Rhode Island Plaza in Northeast, Washington, D.C. Further, many of these projects completed in the Washington Metropolitan Area were constructed by the F&W Construction Company, the same construction company listed for Lee Gardens. The "F" of F&W stands for Fred Schnider and the "W" for Walter von Herbulis.¹⁶

¹⁵ Stephen A. Morris, "Lee Gardens," Paper prepared for Historic Preservation class, The George Washington University, Washington, D.C. 1986. Archived at the Virginia Room, Arlington Central Library, Arlington, Virginia.

¹⁶ Morris, "Lee Gardens."

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10. Geographical Data

Boundary Justification

The boundaries for the property include the ten-acre tract in the northern section of the original acreage purchased in 1941 by Lee Gardens, Inc. for the development of the first and second phases of the Lee Gardens Apartment Complex. These boundaries are the original boundaries of the property and include the residential units, recreation areas, and off-street parking areas associated with the development as designed by Mihran Mesrobian and constructed by the F&W Construction Company in 1949-1950.